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STUDIES IN ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, presented to Agnes Irwin, Litt. D., LL. D., Dean of Radcliffe College, 1894-1909. Boston and London, Ginn and Company, 1910.

This volume of Radcliffe Studies, presented to the former Dean of Radcliffe College, consists of nine contributions ranging from a dedicatory poem by Mrs. Marks to such a highly scientific paper as that of Miss Allen on the *Authorship of the Prick of Conscience*. Between these we find an essay on *Virgil's Use of Märchen from the Odyssey* by Grace Harriet Macurdy; a useful analysis of *The Story of Vortigern's Tower*; an announcement of *An Arthurian Onomasticon* collected by Alma Blount and now accessible to scholars in the library of Harvard University; an exact description by Dr. Schoepperle of the conventional island combat of romance, as illustrated in *Tristan*,—a convention which Dr. Schoepperle considers independent of the Scandinavian *holmganga*; Miss Harper's discussion of the Brome and Chester plays of Abraham and Isaac, which leads to the conclusion that the two have probably a common source, "that in any case the Chester play was not derived from the Brome," and that the Brome play as it has come down to us, is a more highly developed and a later type of the Abraham play than the Chester; *Some Aspects of the Ancient Allegorical Debate* by Margaret C. Waites; and a successful criticism by Edith Scamman of Professor Skeat's view that *Death and Life* and *Scottish Field* are by the same author, with an attempt, in the subsequent sections of her paper, to show that the author of *Death and Life* was influenced by Dunbar and "greatly indebted to Piers the Plowman."

The most noteworthy contribution to the volume is Miss Allen's *Authorship of the Prick of Conscience*. Miss Allen attempts to show that the evidence for Rolle's authorship is inadequate and that there are, on the other hand, substantial and positive reasons for excluding the poem from the Rolle canon. The external evidence for Hampole's authorship is as follows: a passage in a contemporary manuscript (Harl. 1766) of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, which declares that Richard "drowh in ynglyssh the prykke of conscience"; the testimony of Bale in his note-book and bibliography to Richard's authorship of a *De Stimulo Conscientiae*, "which, to judge from the first line quoted, is in Latin prose"; the testimony of Pits to one book of a *Stimulus Conscientiae*; the mention of a *Stimulus Conscientiae* by Wharton, by Oudin, and by Tanner, the latter registering manuscript in English and Latin; and finally the assignment of the work to Rolle by some of the manuscripts. On the other hand, the *Prick of*

*Conscience* is not mentioned in the *Office*, an account of the hermit prepared by the nuns of Hampole; there is a marked difference between its style and that common to authenticated works of Hampole; and, if we suppose it to be a translation, it is a translation of a very different sort from that presented in the *Psalter*. The established works of Rolle grouped by Miss Allen for comparison with the *Prick of Conscience* are: *Fire of Love*, *Mending of Life*, *Form of Living*, *The Commandment of Love to God*, *Ego Dormio et Cor Meum Vigilat*, and the *Psalter*. All of these, unlike the *Prick of Conscience*, are mystical.

In the absence of a definitive Rolle canon, some uncertainty must, of course, attach to the unit into comparison with which Miss Allen brings the *Prick of Conscience*. Is it sufficiently inclusive? Granting that it is, we may conclude that the *Prick of Conscience* has none of the hall-marks of Rolle's work. That such a manual of practical ethics should have been written by him, remains nevertheless a possibility. "Admirande autem et utiles imprimis erant huius sancti occupaciones in sanctis exhortationibus quibus quam plurimos convertit ad Deum, in scriptis etiam suis mellifluis et tractatibus et libellis ad edificacionem proximorum compositis, quae omnia in cordibus devotorum dulcissimam resonant armoniam." There is in this passage, which Miss Allen quotes only in part, a pretty clear indication that Richard approved by his practice the active as well as the contemplative life. That such a "useful occupation" as the composition or translation of the *Prick of Conscience* should not be specifically noted in the *Office* is neither here nor there, since only one of Rolle's works has received that distinction and since the *Office* was written to celebrate the mystical and miraculous in Rolle's life. Nor do we think that Miss Allen has done justice to the testimony of Lydgate, however we interpret the words "drowh in ynglyssh." And the same may be said of her treatment of the early bibliographers. What, for instance, does Miss Allen mean by saying that Bale's single entry refers to "a manuscript of *De Stimulo Conscientiae* in Westminster, which, to judge from the first line quoted, is in Latin prose"? The reference is, *ex collegio Martonensi, Oxon.* and the Latin *ab eterno et ante tempora fuit Deus*, a translation of the opening lines of the *Prick of Conscience* proper, no more indicates a Latin text, than *Rithmum de Thopaso, viri fratres attendite bono*, means that Bale had a Latin copy of Sir Thopas before him. Miss Allen notes that Pits and Oudin also list a Merton College *Stimulus*, Pits adding in one case an entry specifically marked *latine*. Is it clear that "these early bibliographers do not present the solid front in regard to manu-

script attribution that one would expect"? In how many cases the manuscripts themselves, a great many of which have been studied by Andreae and Bülbring, assign the work to Rolle, Miss Allen is unable to say; "a thorough examination of the dialect of the *Prick of Conscience* and the other works ascribed to Rolle has not been made"; and "in the consideration of vocabulary and phraseology there are elements present that render that part of the inquiry somewhat unfruitful"; she adds: "the subject matter is so unlike as to explain many differences of this sort." The author's modifications of these concessions we cannot enter into here. However modified or interpreted, they mean that Miss Allen's valuable paper leaves something to be desired. What she has accomplished is a careful examination of a considerable part of the evidence which bears upon Rolle's supposed authorship of the *Prick of Conscience*. H. S. V. JONES.

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TRUTH AND REALITY. An introduction to the Theory of Knowledge. By John Elof Boodin. The Macmillan Company. New York. 1911, pp. VIII-334.

Philosophic discussion of the past decade has centered pretty largely in the question of truth. Professor Boodin's book is a well-written and interesting contribution to this discussion. In its aims it is constructive and expository rather than polemic. The author attempts to give, from the standpoint of the "new realism," a presentation of the problem which recognizes the truth of rival theories and avoids their difficulties. As point of departure he takes the results of modern biology and psychology, which are presented in stimulating fashion; after which he takes up in order *The Nature of Truth*, *The Criterion of Truth*, and *Truth and its Object*. Limitations of space make it necessary to omit from present consideration much that is of interest and merit, in order to give proper attention to the matters which are fundamental in Professor Boodin's book.

What is truth? The endeavor to answer this question leads at once into the endless ramifications and technicalities of philosophic controversy. To the outsider all these attacks and counter-attacks may seem to embody the acme of academic barrenness and futility. Some permanent results, however, seem to have been secured, albeit largely of a negative sort. The notion that truth is a process of duplication or copying has been generally discarded as impracticable. Truth as an "agreement" between an idea and its object is likewise empty, unless agreement can be explained in detail and in the concrete. The pragmatic doctrine that truth is the function